

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE



Denby S. Lloyd, Commissioner
John R. Hilsinger, Director



Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Steve Hayes, Area Management Biologist
Eric Newland, Asst. Area Management Biologist
Lower Yukon Area Office
P.O. Box 127
Emmonak, AK 99581
Phone: (907) 949-1320
Fax: (907) 949-1830
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U.S. Department of Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Federal Subsistence Board
Thomas O. Melius, Regional Director
Peter J. Probasco, Asst.
Regional Director Subsistence
Russ Holder, Yukon Area Inseason Manager
Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office
101 12th Avenue, Rm 110
Fairbanks, AK 99701
Phone: (907) 455-1849 or 1-800-267-3997
Fax (907) 455-1853

2008 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 14
Announcement # 10, Lower Yukon Subsistence Fishing Reduction
Districts Affected: Lower Yukon Area

The Yukon River Chinook salmon run appears weak. All available run assessment information is reviewed on a daily basis, including Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF), Pilot Station sonar, Marshall Test Fishery, subsistence harvest reports, and age composition data. This information is used to evaluate abundance, run timing, and quality of the Chinook salmon run. At this time, all indicators point to a weak Chinook salmon run which is disappointing because of adequate spawning escapement in the parent years that produced this season's run.

The LYTF detected the first pulse of Chinook salmon entering the Yukon River from the evening of June 14 through June 17. The cumulative CPUE through June 21 is 6.76 which is about half the average of 12.01 for this date. The estimated first quarter point is June 17 which is two days later than average.

The Pilot Station sonar passage estimate through June 21 is approximately 26,000 Chinook salmon which is less than half the average of 58,000 for this date. The first pulse of Chinook salmon yielded a lower than expected estimate of approximately 10,000 fish. Over the next few days, we do not expect a significant increase in the number of Chinook salmon at Pilot Station because a low number of fish has been observed at LYTF (three days travel time downstream) since the first pulse of fish. These recent data are raising concerns about the magnitude of the run. The estimated total run passed Pilot Station could be as low as 80,000 fish.

The projected Chinook salmon run abundance will not support customary subsistence harvests and meet escapement goals in Alaska and meet the interim management escapement goal (IMEG) of >45,000 fish in Canada agreed to by the Yukon River Panel.

In an effort to conserve Chinook salmon, subsistence fishing periods are being reduced beginning in the lower river districts. These reductions, while unfortunate, are necessary to provide adequate

numbers of Chinook salmon on the spawning grounds.

In the lower river districts, subsistence salmon fishing periods will be reduced to two 18-hour periods per week with gill nets restricted to a maximum of 6-inch mesh size in Districts Y-1, Y-2 and Y-3 until further notice. The mesh size is being reduced to allow subsistence users to target chum while conserving Chinook salmon.

During the subsistence salmon fishing closures, all gillnets with a mesh size greater than four inches must be removed from the water.

District Y-1 and the Coastal District:

Effective Monday, June 23, in District Y-1 and that portion of the Coastal District north of 62 degrees north latitude and south of Chris Point, subsistence salmon fishing is open from 8:00 p.m. Mondays until 2:00 p.m. Tuesdays and from 8:00 p.m. Thursdays until 2:00 p.m. Fridays with gill nets restricted to a maximum of 6-inch mesh size .

The Coastal District south of 62 degrees north, which includes the villages of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay, subsistence salmon fishing will remain open 7 days per week.

District Y-2:

Effective Wednesday, June 25, subsistence salmon fishing is open from 8:00 p.m. Wednesdays until 2:00 p.m. Thursdays and from 8:00 p.m. Sundays until 2:00 p.m. Mondays with gill nets restricted to a maximum of 6-inch mesh size.

District Y-3:

Effective Friday, June 27, Subsistence salmon fishing is open from 8:00 a.m. Fridays until 2:00 a.m. Saturdays and from 8:00 a.m. Tuesdays until 2:00 a.m. Wednesdays with gill nets restricted to a maximum of 6-inch mesh size.

If, based on ongoing evaluation, the Chinook salmon run strength significantly improves Districts Y-1, Y-2 and Y-3 may return to their normal subsistence salmon fishing schedule.

The department will issue a news release by June 29 concerning future subsistence periods.

For recorded Lower Yukon fishery announcements and updates call the 24-hour hotline in Emmonak at 949-1731. For current subsistence and commercial fishing information concerning the Upper Yukon fishery, call toll free outside of Fairbanks (1-866) 479-7387, and in Fairbanks 459-7387. If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Emmonak 949-1320. The Fish and Game office stands by on VHF channel 7a.

This has been an announcement by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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